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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

[REDACTED] 25X1  
SP - 167/82  
16 November 1982  
Copy 6

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
THROUGH: Executive Director  
FROM: Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council  
SUBJECT: NSC Staff Request for Evaluations of the  
A Team-B Team Experiment

1. We have received a verbal request from Walt Raymond, NSC Intelligence Representative, for the Intelligence Community's evaluation of the A Team-B Team experiment for use by Dr. Richard E Pipes. We were not informed of the purpose of the request except that it was in connection with official NSC Staff business. [REDACTED] 25X1

2. There was no formal evaluation of the experiment by the Intelligence Community, however, we have evaluated and commented on the experiment in response to numerous requests, some of which were for internal CIA use. As you know, there has been a great deal of misinformation in the media and misunderstandings among government officials about the origins, conduct and results of the experiment and about its effect on the national intelligence estimating process. We believe the evaluations and commentaries selected to forward to Dr. Pipes, all of which have been disseminated outside the Agency, clarify some of the misunderstandings about the experiment. [REDACTED] 25X1

3. The attached memorandum for your signature contains a description of each of the documents being forwarded.

--Copies of attachments 1, 2 and 3 were previously forwarded to the NSC Staff.

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SP - 167/82

SUBJECT: NSC Staff Request for Evaluations of the A Team-B Team Experiment

--Attachment 4, the SSCI report on the experiment was probably made available to someone in the NSC Staff by the Committee at the time the report was prepared.

--Attachment 5, was prepared primarily for Secretary Weinberger but Mr. Carlucci may have given copies of the paper to other members of the new Administration.

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Attachments

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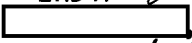


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SP - 167/82

SUBJECT: NSC Staff Request for Evaluations of the A Team-B Team Experiment

Distribution:

- Cy 1 - DDCI - *destroyed* 19 NOV 1982  
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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

[REDACTED]  
SP - 166/82  
16 November 1982  
Copy 7

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Richard E. Pipes, NSC Staff

SUBJECT: Intelligence Evaluations of the A Team-B Team  
Experiment (U)

1. The attached documents are forwarded in response to your request for the Intelligence Community's evaluation of the A Team-B Team Experiment. [REDACTED]

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2. There was no formal evaluation by the Intelligence Community, but we have evaluated and commented on the experiment and various aspects of it in response to a number of requests. The attached evaluations and commentaries are those we believe will be most useful to you. [REDACTED]

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John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director

Attachments

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SP - 166/82

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SUBJECT: Intelligence Evaluations of the A Team-B Team Experiment (U)

## Distribution:

- Cy 1 - Dr. Richard E. Pipes, NSC Staff - *destroyed* 19 NOV 1982
- 2 - DDCI (w/o attachments)
- 3 - ExDir (w/o attachments) - *destroyed* 19 NOV 1982
- 4 - [REDACTED] ES/DCI (w/o attachments) - *destroyed* 19 NOV 1982
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16 November 1982

EVALUATIONS OF THE A TEAM-B TEAM EXPERIMENTAttachment 1

Memorandum for recipients of NIE 11-3/8-76, Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict Through the Mid-1980s, from George Bush. This memorandum, which was disseminated with all copies of the NIE, was intended to explain the relationship between the B Team reports and the NIE and to clarify incorrect allegations about the experiment that had appeared in the media.

Attachment 2

Memorandum for the Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from George Bush, subject, "Recommendations of Team B-Soviet Strategic Objectives," 19 January 1977. This memorandum contains the final DCI position on the recommendations of the B Team.

Attachment 3

Memorandum for the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Chairman, Presidents Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, subject "Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis: A Team Comments on B Team Reports," 26 February 1977. The evaluations and comments in this memorandum were forwarded to complete the actions called for by the experiment.

Attachment 4

Final draft of the SSCI Report on "The National Intelligence Estimates--B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Strategic Capabilities and Objectives." Included is a 3 May 1977 summary of key points in the SSCI report.

Attachment 5

Blind Memorandum, "The B Team Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives," 17 December 1980. This was the last summary prepared on the experiment and was requested by Mr. Carlucci for use during the period of selection and Senate confirmation of officials of the Reagan Administration. The memorandum summarizes the experiment and its results. More detailed evaluations done for other purposes are attached.

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

ATTACHMENT 3

MEMORANDUM FOR: Recipients of National Intelligence Estimate  
11-3/8-76, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental  
Conflict Through the Mid-1980s"

FROM George Bush

1. The attached National Intelligence Estimate is the official appraisal of the Director of Central Intelligence. This Estimate, including its italicized statements of differing views by members of The National Foreign Intelligence Board, was drafted and coordinated by professional intelligence officers of the US Intelligence Community and was approved by me with the advice of the Board.
2. The judgments arrived at in this Estimate were made after all parties to the Estimate had the benefit of alternative views from the various elements of the Community and from panels of experts from outside government on a few selected subjects. The assembling of the panels of outside experts, and the consideration of their views, was agreed upon by me and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board as an experiment, the purpose of which was to determine whether those known for their more somber views of Soviet capabilities and objectives could present the evidence in a sufficiently convincing way to alter the analytical judgments that otherwise would have been presented in the attached document. The views of these experts did have some effect. But to the extent that this Estimate presents a starker appreciation of Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives, it is but the latest in a series of estimates that have done so as evidence has accumulated on the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet programs in the strategic offensive and defensive fields.

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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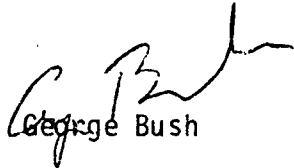
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3. The experiment in competitive analysis that was begun with this Estimate has not been completed, and any final judgment on its utility cannot be rendered. Nevertheless, there is a negative aspect that is already clear and which concerns me deeply; namely, the selective leaks regarding the details of the process and, worse, the substantive conclusions developed by the "Team B" panel that was concerned with Soviet strategic objectives. Inspired by these selective leaks, allegations have appeared in the press that the judgments appearing in this official Estimate were shaped by pressure from the "Team B."

4. There is no truth to such allegations. The judgments in the attached Estimate are the best that can be made on the basis of the analysis of the available evidence.

5. Although these leaks may appear to discredit what I continue to regard as a worthwhile experiment, they have not diminished the integrity of the Estimate itself, nor the integrity of the Intelligence Community.

  
George Bush

Attachment

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Executive Registry

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WORK COPY

NO # 139-22

19 January 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman  
President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

FROM : George Bush

SUBJECT : Recommendations of Team B -- Soviet Strategic Objectives

1. I am forwarding to you the attached series of B Team recommendations on how national intelligence estimates should be produced, as we agreed in a previous discussion. We must, obviously, always examine suggestions such as these from experienced observers of the process with the aim of improving the process further. Few of this B Team's observations are, however, entirely new to us, and the problems they address are under scrutiny. The Team's recommendations appear, moreover, insensitive to the costs and penalties of implementing them.

2. In considering the attached recommendations, it is useful for us to remember that the methods for producing national intelligence estimates have evolved over the past 25 years in response to the changing interests and styles of administrations, the organizational methods of a number of Directors of Central Intelligence, and the international situation itself. At present, national estimates on Soviet strategic programs and capabilities are produced by a method which centralizes the supervisory responsibilities in a National Intelligence Officer on the DCI's staff, but decentralizes the analytical and drafting responsibilities to teams of analysts from the various intelligence agencies. This method is designed to ensure that significant analyses and judgments from all elements of the Intelligence Community are reflected at all stages in the process and that no single staff or agency determines the results. The process encourages the exposure

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of divergent views. NIO management is charged with ensuring that significant differences are illuminated and that consensus judgments due to bureaucratic pressures are avoided.

3. The present production method is consistent with certain principles which have guided the preparation of the NIEs throughout their history, regardless of organizational adjustments:

a. A national intelligence estimate is the DCI's responsibility in accordance with his statutory duties. The main text represents his best judgment.

b. A national estimate involves the participation of the agencies of the Intelligence Community, whose representatives on the National Foreign Intelligence Board have the right and duty to introduce into the estimate abstentions or opinions which diverge substantially from those expressed in the main text.

c. A national estimate is designed to address major topics of concern to US planners and policymakers, and hence its content and its producers cannot be isolated from the process it is designed to support; at the same time, it is not a mechanism for critiquing or recommending policy.

4. The current method of producing drafts is only one of a number of methods which could be employed. Any change, however, should be consistent with the style and needs of a particular administration and a particular DCI, while preserving the principles above.

5. Turning to the specific points in the B Team's recommendations, I believe a number of observations need to be recorded:

a. Mirror Imaging. The B Team's charge that "soft" factors affecting Soviet motivation do not receive "thorough" analytical attention is simply not true. What is obviously true is that the B Team's analysis of these "soft" factors differs from that of at least some in the Intelligence Community. For example, along with much evidence of the Soviet drive to acquire military preponderance, there is voluminous evidence

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that the Soviets have a high respect for the technical and industrial might behind US military programs. As for the need to perceive Soviet objectives in terms of Soviet concepts, an effort has been made to judge Soviet policy on the basis of a large number of factors and influences, of which doctrine is one. In this year's NIE 11-3/8, partly stimulated by the competitive analysis experiment, a special effort was made to describe Soviet objectives and military doctrine in Soviet terms so as not to leave any impression that the USSR had been judged only in US terms. This practice should be continued, but not to the extent that every specific estimate need be prefaced by a long exposition of the Soviets' doctrine and ultimate objectives.

b. Net Assessments. I agree that those net assessments which are the result of a quantitative analytical process should be so identified. In NIE 11-3/8-76, we have largely eliminated net assessments which are not a result of such a process, partly because new evidence has given rise to greater uncertainty and partly because the significance of operational factors was well illustrated by the B Team on Soviet air defense. The NIE calls attention to the fact that a full net assessment would be required to take adequate account of such factors and that the estimate is not such a net assessment.

i. While accepting the B Team's recommendation, we would not agree that net judgments can never be delivered; some judgments in this complex world remain important and susceptible to experienced analysis. Most predictive analyses or interpretations of the policies and expectations of foreign leaders require an analytical model which includes US policies and forces among the influences affecting those leaders. Even estimates of the technical capabilities of a potential adversary's weapon systems require an "interaction analysis," one part of which is the US force which the foreign system was designed to engage.

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ii. As for comprehensive net assessments, we have all recognized for some time that there is no national level organization responsible for such assessments on a regular basis. I hope my successor will encourage officials of the new administration to identify such an organization -- perhaps at the NSC staff level -- and pledge the Intelligence Community to cooperate by providing the intelligence data and insights necessary for its operation. For my part, I would object to assigning the responsibility for such full net assessments of the US-USSR strategic balance, or the balance in other situations involving US and foreign forces, to the Intelligence Community. Such an arrangement would give excessive responsibility to the Intelligence Community and would be unlikely to promote the cooperation of policymaking departments whose participation would be essential.

c. An Integrated View of Soviet Weapons and Force Developments. The packaging of national intelligence on Soviet military forces into several operational categories resulted initially from consumers' requests in the 1960s to organize the presentation of intelligence according to the way the US plans its forces -- strategic offensive, strategic defensive, and general purpose forces. The US defense planning process continues to require this type of presentation.

i. In 1974, the separate estimates of Soviet offensive and defense forces for intercontinental conflict were combined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense, into a single estimate in response to consumer requirements for intelligence on the strategic nuclear balance -- that is, the balance as the US measures it.

ii. Our present estimative program acknowledges the further requirement, suggested by other groups as well as the B Team, for national intelligence on overall Soviet military and foreign policy objectives (as in NIE 11-4) and on overall trends in Soviet military forces and capabilities (as in an interagency intelligence memorandum issued in October 1976).

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These integrated assessments could not be done without the more detailed assessments of individual aspects of Soviet power and probably need not be done routinely on an annual basis. We will investigate with key users the advisability of further integration of NIEs. We would, however, strongly resist drawing the impractical conclusion from the B Team recommendation that one should never estimate about a part of the Soviet strategic effort unless one appraises the entire Soviet effort.

d. Policy Pressures and Considerations. I certainly would not quarrel with minimizing any possible policy pressure on NIE judgments and preventing the abdication by the intelligence apparatus of its responsibility to provide objective answers. I would note, however, that the estimative process, as carried out by the DCI under the principles cited at the beginning of these remarks, is designed to do just that. The NFIB participants bring to the estimating process differing experiences and professional backgrounds. If some representatives have convictions about US policy that correspond closely to the advocacy of the bureaucracies they represent, the variety of points of view introduces checks and balances into the system. The professional integrity of the participants, moreover, should not be lightly dismissed. In any case, the DCI, the National Intelligence Officers who support him in supervising the estimative process, and the CIA analysts who have a major role in the drafting process, do not represent any department of government involved in the policymaking process. Their independent bureaucratic positions minimize the susceptibility of the DCI, NIOs, and CIA analysts to policy pressures and allow them to serve as an important check on the objectivity of the process.

e. Disciplined Presentation of Conclusions. I have some difficulty grasping what Team B has in mind. I would not prescribe a format for the conclusions and key judgments in NIEs so rigorous that we could not adjust to the nature of the intelligence available and the needs

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of the policymakers being supported. I would, on the other hand, agree that consistency is desirable; that we should accurately convey uncertainty and alternatives; and that when important changes occur in the judgments of estimates, the fact of and the reasons for these changes should be called to the attention of readers. A periodic track record of key judgments in an NIE has occasionally been useful. Where and how often one is done should be a matter for intelligence managers and consumers to decide on the basis of practical considerations.

f. Procedures. This section contains a curious discussion of institutional bias. Many people imagine they understand the nature and sources of State's and Defense's biases; it would have been interesting if the report had discussed the nature and sources of the bias attributed to CIA. In its argument, Team B appears to adopt the following approach: all past errors are the fault of CIA, even when everyone else was in agreement; the reason for this is CIA's major role in the preparation of estimates; therefore, take the estimates out of CIA's, and possibly even out of the DCI's, hands.

i. The possibility is raised of a chief estimative officer and staff within the Executive Office of the President. If this chief estimative officer were not the DCI, the arrangement would circumvent the statutory responsibilities of the DCI. If the officer the B Team has in mind is, in fact, the DCI, the question of the location of his estimative function and staff would have to be considered as part of the broader question of the role of CIA in the Community. My judgment is that physical and institutional separation of the DCI from CIA would sharply limit his ability to reach responsible judgments because it would cut him off from his independent analytical base.

ii. This organizational recommendation fails to take into account the checks and balances built into the system. The preparation of the NIE 11-3/8 estimates, for example, involves a program of production by analysts within the military services, CIA, and DIA, their various contractors, DCI Committees, and analytical teams drawn from the several agencies.

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This specific recommendation reveals naivete about the interactions of policy and intelligence that, in my opinion, tends to undercut the credibility of other observations.

iii. The recommendation is silent on all the big questions -- how would the NIEs be drafted; how would the draft contributions be pulled into a single document; how would coordination be achieved; how would the rules of dissent and alternative statement be enforced; and how would final power of approval of the text be exercised? Would the B Team have us reintroduce a monopoly on the drafting of estimative intelligence, one of the weaknesses perceived in the former ONE staff system? And would not the location of the estimative process in the Executive Office of the President in fact subject that process to additional policy pressures without the checks and balances of the current national intelligence production mechanism?

iv. The B Team recommendation concerning the use of a panel of outside specialists to review NIEs is sensible. Such panels have been used at various times in the past. Some months ago, I approved in principle a plan to establish an Estimates Advisory Panel that would include a broad range of outside experts with a variety of viewpoints. Because of the impending change of administrations, however, I delayed the formation of this panel, but commend it to my successor.

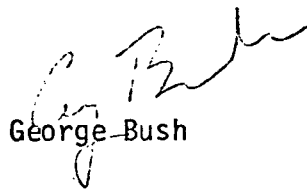
v. The recommendation that adversarial procedures similar to the B Team experiment be continued, perhaps every other year, is one I oppose. It is not that the experiment was a total failure; to the contrary, the B Team on low altitude air defense made a particular contribution. Rather, it is that, when one sets out to establish an adversarial B Team, one sets in motion a process that lends itself to manipulation for purposes other than estimative accuracy. I am already, incidentally, getting recommendations that, should the process every be repeated, a C Team of a persuasion

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opposed to the B Team should be established to review the estimate at the same time. I would prefer to convene panels of experts with a mix of views. Indeed, I would expect that my successor might very well wish to do so. Individual agencies and DCI Committees should also continue the practice of using panels of experts such as those convened by the CIA and the OSD to review technical analysis of Backfire performance and the panel of US experts in the field of directed energy convened by the DCI's Scientific and Technical Intelligence Committee to review evidence of Soviet research applicable to particle beam weapons.

6. The essence of national intelligence production is that it marshals the full resources of the Intelligence Community to address the most important analytical and estimative problems, that it provides the base which allows the DCI to fulfill his mandate as an independent advisor to the President, and that it displays for policymakers such differing analyses as exist on important issues. The challenge is to produce these results; doing so depends first of all on the quantity and quality of the resources and talent devoted to it. Equally critical at this highest level of need is the willingness of policymakers to help the Intelligence Community concentrate on the issues of most concern and, then, to support the Community when it accomplishes its mission. Both these factors are far more important for the production of national intelligence than the changeable procedures that may be used.

  
George Bush

Attachment:  
As stated

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence  
Advisory Board

THROUGH : Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Recommendations of Team "B" - Soviet  
Strategic Objectives

In our critique of current and previous National Intelligence Estimates, we made a concerted effort to identify those aspects of methodology, procedure and institutional structure which we believe have contributed to unsound estimative judgments. In the attached paper we proffer our recommendations to PFIAB concerning improvements in methodology, procedure and structure aimed at correcting the perceived deficiencies. Evidence for our conclusion that the cited shortcomings do, in fact, exist in the NIEs is to be found in the main body of our report.

Professor Richard Pipes, Team Leader

Professor William R. Van Cleave, Team Member

General Daniel O. Graham, Team Member

The Honorable Paul Nitze, Advisor

Ambassador Seymour Weiss, Advisor

Dr. Paul Wolfowitz, Advisor

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Team "B" Recommendations

## 1. Concerning methodology

A. Mirror Imaging. To overcome the bias toward viewing Soviet motives and intentions in U.S. terms, it is urged that:

1) In dealing with Soviet intentions, the NIEs should integrate observed and projected Soviet weapons' programs and force deployments derived from the "hard" physical data with more thorough analysis of historical, political, institutional, and other "soft" factors shaping Soviet motives and intentions. The search should be for a consistent elucidation of both sets of factors and their interaction. In this connection considerably more attention should be paid to relevant open and clandestinely acquired Soviet pronouncements and writings (especially those directed to internal audiences) than has been the case in the past. In this regard it should be understood that expert analysis of the open material can reveal a great deal, insofar as the Soviet political system often compels the Party to issue to its cadres authoritative guidance on policy matters through unclassified sources;

2) Soviet objectives should be perceived in terms of Soviet concepts: this rule applies especially to the treatment of concepts like "strategy", "strategic threat" and "strategic objectives", all of which should be understood in the Soviet context of "grand strategy." When, for reasons of convenience to U.S. consumers, the NIEs address Soviet military programs in the U.S. rather than the Soviet strategic context, this fact should be made clearly evident to the reader.

B. Net assessing.<sup>\*</sup> Whatever their intentions, the drafters of the NIEs do engage in implicit net assessments of sorts, particularly when advancing major judgments in the executive summaries. These

<sup>\*</sup> What we mean by net assessment in this context is a judgment on the balance between U.S. and Soviet military capabilities based on the relevant static indicators extant or projected, or based on a dynamic analysis of the balance assuming that those capabilities actually are to be called into use. The latter type of net assessment assumes a scenario, but may or may not assume actual warfare.

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assessments are usually so rough, so poorly documented, and essentially so speculative that they invite -- indeed, cannot be immune from -- the injection of the authors' general biases. Where NIE judgments demand net assessment, the netting should be done explicitly, analytically, and thoroughly, not implicitly or perfunctorily. The interface between NIE judgment and net assessment should be identifiable.

C. An integrated view of Soviet weapons and force developments.

The NIEs tend to an excessive extent to analyze each Soviet weapon system in isolation from the totality of the Soviet military effort (and indeed from other relevant non-military factors as well), with the result that the overall Soviet military effort appears as less significant than it actually is. Team "B" urges that in the future weapons systems and force developments be examined in a more integrated manner to yield "combined evaluations" more indicative of Soviet total military capabilities and overall intentions.

D. Policy pressures and considerations. In the opinion of Team "B", total avoidance of policy pressure on the intelligence estimating process is an impossible goal. The normal and proper function of policy makers in raising questions which are to be addressed by the intelligence estimators in and of itself influences the answers the latter provide. Some awareness on the part of the estimator of the impact of intelligence judgments in support of or in opposition to policy is unavoidable. Nonetheless, improved methods and procedures adopted for the preparation of the NIEs should be able to minimize the policy pressure on judgments and prevent the abdication by the intelligence apparatus of its responsibility to provide objective answers.

E. Disciplined presentation of conclusions. Key judgments of NIEs are presented in various styles and formats. This on the one hand permits statements to be made with a certainty that is not warranted by the available evidence, and on the other hand permits statements, better supported by the evidence, to be degraded in the reader's mind through the insertion of a clause or sentence that have the effect of dismissing their impact. A more disciplined (though not necessarily rigid) format for NIE key judgments, summaries, and conclusions should be constructed. The format and style should ensure that the various reasonable interpretations of the available evidence are laid out without semantic embellishment; that the pros and cons of evidence supporting each are discussed briefly; that the likelihood of occurrence of each is assessed; and that the requirements for additional data to resolve remaining uncertainties are identified. Further, each major intelligence estimate should contain

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as an annex a review of the past 2 to 10 years' "track record" of U.S. estimates on the major aspects of the relevant subject matter. Such an annex would be best prepared by a body of analysts not responsible for the estimates critiqued. The purpose of such an annex would not be to criticize or chastise but rather to throw light on possible trends of misanalysis or mistaken judgments so that a compounding of error by continuation into future intelligence estimates can be avoided.

## 2. Concerning procedures.

A. Some, though undoubtedly not all of the methodological shortcomings which Team "B" found in the National Intelligence Estimates can be overcome by improving the process of their preparation and review. The authors of the NIEs will always remain in some measure prone to perceive the USSR in U.S. terms and to allow political considerations to affect their judgments. Nevertheless by minimizing inherent institutional biases and broadening the range of judgments brought to bear on the NIEs it should be possible to weaken considerably the impact of factors which have accounted in the past for NIE misperceptions.

B. Team "B" considers the organizational position of the NIE function within the national defense - security - foreign policy complex less than optimal for guarding against both policy and institutional biases. Current and previous organizational entities charged with preparation and processing of NIEs have been subordinate to the Director, CIA, and staffed almost exclusively with CIA officials. This arrangement was intended to compensate for the real or alleged biases of the Departments of Defense and State, but it can over-compensate by encouraging the institutional biases of the Central Intelligence Agency itself.

C. Team "B" recommends that some combination of the following three steps be considered:

- 1) The first involves building as much immunity to institutional pressures as possible into that entity which is charged with preparing NIEs on Soviet strategic objectives. There are various ways to accomplish this end. One attractive possibility is to identify an official in the Executive Office of the President who would be charged with assuring such immunity and who would report directly to the President. His staff would be small and guarded against acquiring an institutional life of its own. Members of the staff would be drawn from the various intelligence organizations and serve relatively short tenures (3-4 years). The official charged with this function would be genuinely removed from and independent of the operating membership of the NFIB by the devices of a separate budget, a separate staff, and a separate physical location. He should have the authority to subpoena substantive intelligence officers from any agency and to require

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of pertinent departments and agencies such net assessments as may be necessary to the NIE process;

2) The second step involves the marshalling of expertise in and out of government to offset the temptation to mirror-image. The official charged with assuring the objectivity of the NIEs (as specified above) should enlist the part-time services of a panel of prominent outside specialists for the purpose of reviewing estimates so as to identify judgments that are based on questionable assumptions concerning Soviet strategic doctrine and behavior. Such reviews should be carried out immediately post facto, but they should not form a part of the NIE preparation process itself.

3) The third step involves periodic independent checks on both the process and the substance of the NIEs by employing procedures similar to the PFIAB-conceived Team "B" approach. Intermittently, perhaps initially every second year, a team of outside experts who owe no formal responsibility to the existing governmental intelligence agencies would be assembled to play the adversary role. The composition of the Team would vary every time. Team members would have available all the pertinent information from all the sources. The effort would be reasonably time constrained. The report of the Team would be subject neither to review nor to revision but would be made available directly to the President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. (After the Team had made its report, it would become available to other governmental agencies for criticism but not for revision). While this step would not eliminate the particular views and biases which the non-governmental experts would bring to their study, it would be free of the bureaucratic pressures or biases of the existing governmental intelligence -- or indeed policy -- agencies.

D. Team "B" has not addressed itself to substantive national intelligence issues other than Soviet strategic objectives. Should similarly critical issues arise -- e.g., with regard to China or the Middle East -- the above recommended processes could help to ensure objective intelligence support to top policy makers.

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**TOP SECRET****THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

TS 771507

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**WORK COPY****26 FEB 1977**

Office of the Director

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

**SUBJECT:** Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis:  
A Team Comments on the B Team Reports

1. As spelled out in Leo Cherne's letter to George Bush of 8 June 1976, the ground rules for the experiment in competitive analysis undertaken in connection with the recently completed NIE 11-3/8-76 called for comments by the A Teams responsible for preparing portions of the draft Estimate on the reports submitted by the three B Teams, which have already been forwarded to you.

2. It did not prove feasible in practice to carry out the final part of the experiment exactly as outlined in the ground rules. In the normal course of preparing the NIE, the A Teams were superseded by the NFIB and its representatives, and then by the DCI as he exercised his overall responsibility for the final estimate. In addition, the PFIAB requested that the A and B Teams report their findings and comments to it somewhat earlier in the process than had been anticipated. To meet the needs and schedules of the estimative process and the PFIAB, the comments of the several teams were presented orally to both the PFIAB and the NFIB, after which the B Teams were disbanded and the A Teams resumed their other duties.

3. While I believe the methods actually employed fulfilled the intention of the experiment and its ground rules, I forward herewith comments on the B Team reports which were prepared by my staff to provide a written record.

4. Specific topics covered in these comments are, in order:

a. Soviet Low Altitude Air Defense Capabilities

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**SUBJECT: Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis:  
A Team Comments on the B Team Reports**

- b. Soviet ICBM Accuracy
- c. Soviet Strategic Objectives
- d. Critique of Intelligence Estimates and Methodology by B Team  
on Soviet Objectives

**/s/ E. H. Knoche**

E. H. Knoche  
Acting Director

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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:  
SOVIET LOW ALTITUDE AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

A. Main Conclusions of NIE 11-3/8-76

The Soviet air defense system has critical deficiencies in its ability to defend against air-to-surface missiles and bombers attacking at low altitudes. The USSR will probably not have significantly better defenses against low-altitude air attack before 1980. During the period beyond that time, it is estimated that, for defense against low-altitude bombers, the Soviets have the potential for overcoming many technical deficiencies by mid-1980s; possibly earlier with a very high level of effort. Thus, bomber penetration of Soviet defenses would be considerably more difficult in the mid-1980s than it would be today. The Soviets will not have an effective defense against the SRAM by the mid-1980s. There is uncertainty about the degree of protection that could be achieved against low-altitude cruise missiles in the mid-1980s, but it is estimated that it would be low. (The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force, believes that a new Soviet SAM system under development might provide some limited terminal defense against cruise missiles for approximately half the estimated target groupings in the USSR in the mid-1980s.) Finally, the air defense problems which the Soviets now face would be complicated even further by US deployment of advanced bombers and cruise missiles, but there are nevertheless important uncertainties about the future effectiveness of Soviet air defenses in an actual wartime environment.

B. Main Conclusions of the B Team

The B Team's estimate of the effectiveness of the Soviets' current low-altitude air defense is that it could vary from formidable to marginal. If operated in an optimum manner, existing Soviet air defenses may have the inherent capability to prevent most, if not all, US bombers from reaching their targets. "Marginal" capabilities can be inferred, however, from evidence of Soviet exercises and related sources, giving less weight to the inherent capabilities of Soviet equipment. The B Team concludes that neither of these judgments is inconsistent with the available evidence.

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### C. Reasons for Difference

The NIE contains judgments regarding Soviet low-altitude defenses through 1986; the B Team limited its consideration to Soviet defenses at present and in the near future. The basic difference between the A and B Teams is in the weight each gave to the available evidence versus the gaps and uncertainties.

The A Team believes that the intelligence information which has been obtained from all sources is sufficient to be confident that existing Soviet defenses do in fact suffer from a number of identifiable and critical deficiencies in functions essential to an effective low-altitude defense. It also believes that present information, including information accumulated over many years about how the Soviets operate their air defense system, is sufficient to project Soviet capabilities with confidence over the next several years.

The B Team believes that current intelligence regarding Soviet air defenses is so dominated by unresolved uncertainties that a precise estimate of the defense capability cannot be made. It further holds that the Soviets may already have improved their defensive capabilities in ways not observable by the US, or could do so in the near future.

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#### D. Significance of the Differences

The implications of the B Team findings are that the bomber leg of the US triad of offensive forces could be sharply degraded, relatively quickly, in the near future if not at present. The A Team is confident that this is presently not the case. The B Team findings also imply the lack of any sound intelligence basis for decisions being made to improve US bombers and air-to-surface missiles. Despite uncertainties in its estimates of the future effectiveness of Soviet low-altitude air defenses, the A Team believes the data available, and projections from it, can contribute to the planning of future US bomber and missile forces.

#### E. Influence of the Experiment on the NIE

The B Team's analysis did not persuade the estimators to change the conclusion in the NIE that there are identifiable and critical deficiencies in Soviet low-altitude air defense capabilities which are sustained by the available evidence and will apply for at least the next several years. However, the competitive analysis experiment did influence the drafters of the NIE to address a wider range of possibilities, and to be more explicit in describing uncertainties about Soviet air defense capabilities in the period five to ten years hence than might otherwise have been the case.

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COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:  
SOVIET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A. Main Conclusions of NIE 11-3/8-76

The main text of the Estimate, representing the DCI's position, acknowledges an ultimate Soviet goal of achieving a dominant position over the West, but maintains that other factors must also be considered in assessing the fundamental issue of the USSR's present objectives for its intercontinental forces. The Soviets view such forces as contributing to this ultimate goal but they also respect US capabilities and cannot be certain about future US behavior. Thus they probably do not count on achieving any specific predetermined relationship between their intercontinental capabilities and those of the US during the next decade, and do not count on a combination of actions by the USSR and lack of actions by the US which would permit the Russians, in the next ten years, to devastate the US while preventing the US from devastating the USSR. Soviet expectations, however, evidently reach well beyond a capability for intercontinental conflict that merely continues to be sufficient to deter an all-out attack. The Soviets are striving for war-fighting and war-survival capabilities that would leave the USSR in a better position than the US if a war occurred. They also seek forces with visible and therefore politically useful advantages over the US. They hope that their capabilities for intercontinental conflict will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that these capabilities will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to influence Soviet actions.

While all members of NFIB agree that the Soviets ultimately seek to achieve supremacy over the US and the West, their views of present Soviet policies and expectations differ, as indicated by the italicized text in the NIE and its Key Judgments. In this manner, the authors of the NIE have registered disagreements within the Intelligence Community about Soviet policies for their intercontinental forces during the period of the Estimate.

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## B. Main Conclusions of the B Team

The mandate of the B Team was to take an independent look at the data that go into the preparation of NIE 11-3/8, and on the basis determine whether a good case would be made that Soviet strategic objectives are, in fact, more ambitious and therefore implicitly more threatening to US security than they appear to the authors of the NIE.

In the B Team's view, the Soviet policy is based on an undeviating, operative grand strategy for achieving global hegemony for which military weapons, strategic ones included, represent only one element in a varied arsenal of means of persuasion and coercion. The B Team further regards Soviet thinking about war and politics as fundamentally Clausewitzian in character. Thus the Soviets have demonstrated unflagging persistence and patience in using available means to mold military, economic, political, social, and psychological forces so as to strengthen their own position and weaken that of any prospective challenger.

In support of this, the Soviets strive for effective superiority in all types of military capabilities. In strategic nuclear forces, they place a high priority on achieving a war-fighting and war-winning capability, in the sense of assuring substantial Soviet predominance following a nuclear war, and they may feel that this goal is within their grasp. If such a capability is not attainable, they intend to secure so substantial a nuclear war-fighting advantage that they would be less deterred than the US from initiating the use of nuclear weapons. Finally, the B Team believes that within the 10-year period of the NIE, the Soviets may well expect to achieve a degree of military superiority that would support a dramatically more aggressive pursuit of their objectives, including direct military challenges to vital Western interests.

## C. Reasons for Differences

There appear to be important differences in the approaches of the two teams. That of the B Team reflects a belief in the preeminent influence of ideology and doctrine on Soviet behavior and a reading of Russian history and national character which sees the Soviets as self-assured, offensive-minded, and expansionist. The B Team has thus viewed all Soviet actions

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in the strategic field as presumably part of a cohesive, rational effort to achieve the ultimate goals of Soviet hegemony in the world, and has stressed Soviet official pronouncements and other indications of continued commitment to these goals.

The approach of the CIA analysts and some others on the A Team, in contrast, has reflected an intelligence judgment that Soviet behavior has in varying degrees been influenced by a number of practical concerns and considerations as well as by ideology and doctrine. In evaluating the probable motivations and intentions behind particular Soviet courses of action, they have therefore not only considered how these courses of action might advance traditional Soviet goals and ambitions but have also scrutinized the evidence to determine what other factors may have been at work. These analysts also believe that the B Team's view of Russian history and character fails to take sufficient account of the impact of personal and historical Russian experience with adversity, especially the experience of invasion in World War II, on the outlook of the Soviet leadership. Thus their estimate puts relatively greater weight on continuing Soviet concerns for security than does that of the B Team, especially in evaluating Soviet expectations over the next 10 years.

The approach and conclusions of DIA analysts and the Services are closer to that of the B Team.

D. Influence of the Experiment on the NIE

Many of the B Team's basic conclusions about long-term Soviet aspirations to global dominance are not incompatible with the NIE. Nevertheless, the main text of the Estimate reflects the view that the B Team's picture of the Soviets as "all-aggressive" and "all-offensive" in their force posture, guided by a clearly defined "grand strategy" for the attainment of superiority, is unrealistic. The position of the DCI in the NIE places more stress than the B Team on the very real problems which the Soviets confront, the uncertainties that they face, their high respect for US capabilities, and their concerns about current US programs. Thus the DCI position in the NIE is that there is a wider gap than the B Team believes between current Soviet expectations and the objectives we all agree the Soviets ultimately seek.

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The DCI's estimate of Soviet objectives and expectations in this year's NIE is not substantially different from that of his predecessor in last year's NIE. It is true, however, that over the past several years the successive NIEs have presented an increasingly stark picture of Soviet capabilities and objectives as our evidence and analysis of the scope, vigor, and persistence of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive programs has accumulated. This took place in previous years without any B Team challenge and in fact would have taken place this year had there been none.

The B Team's assessment of Soviet strategic objectives was more assertive than analytical, and hence the report itself made little contribution to the development of intelligence methodology. Nevertheless, the process had several identifiable influences on the NIE. The discipline of having to confront alternative views caused the analytic groups preparing the Estimate to seek particularly carefully to document their conclusions, to be precise in their terminology--especially about Soviet doctrine--and to avoid generalizations about the future which were not firmly grounded in defensible intelligence analysis.

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24 February 1977

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS EXPERIMENT:  
CRITIQUE OF INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES  
AND METHODOLOGY BY B TEAM  
ON SOVIET OBJECTIVES

1. The B Team on Soviet objectives devotes most of its report to a criticism of US strategic estimates and their drafters, past and present. It charges that the estimates, over the years, have tended consistently to underestimate the intensity, scope and implicit threat of Soviet strategic programs, not only in their assessment of Soviet strategic objectives, but also in their treatment of individual weapon systems and force components. It asserts that estimates in the 11-3/8 series have been too narrow in their approach to Soviet national strategy, have concentrated too much on technical matters, and have misinterpreted or neglected the basic elements of Soviet strategic thinking. As a result, the estimators have fallen into a persistent habit of "mirror-imaging," attributing to Soviet decisionmakers essentially US ways of thinking and acting about strategic matters. It charges that the estimates have also been influenced by policy pressures and considerations and by institutional bias, on the part of the civilians "who control the NIE language," against the views of the military intelligence agencies.

2. As to the criticism that estimates in the 11-3/8 series focus too narrowly on forces for intercontinental conflict and that they concentrate too much on technical evidence and hardware, the basic answer is that the physical threat to the US and its Triad is not an improper subject for a NIE. The Intelligence Community may or may not have an accurate appreciation of Soviet "grand strategy," but we do not believe it necessary or desirable to bind all of our conclusions about the Soviet view of the total "correlation of forces" into this particular estimate. NIE 11-4-76 does this.

3. As to the criticism of past underestimates, which it says is caused by attributing US thinking to the Soviets, the B Team has some legitimate grounds for this criticism, at least insofar as earlier estimates are concerned. The estimates of the 1960s failed to foresee the magnitude and sustained character of the Soviet strategic buildup and tended to depict the Soviets as more concerned about stirring up the

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US, more anxious to shift resources to the civilian sector, more willing to settle for assured destruction, and more undecided about the desirability of continuing the buildup than proved to be the case. Those of the 1968-1972 period judged that the Soviets were more interested in stabilizing the strategic relationship on the basis of rough equality than now appears to be the case. The 1972 estimate was wrong in depicting the desire to avoid jeopardizing detente as probably representing a significant constraint on Soviet behavior.

4. These errors were serious, and must be guarded against in the future. With these notable exceptions, however, the B Team's views appear to be largely based on misreading of the estimative history, especially the history of the past several years:

--The B Team's presentation of "implicit NIE assumptions and judgments" and its summary of the estimative history are marked by selective quotations and serious misinterpretations of what the estimates actually said.

--As one of a number of examples, the B Team says that the "major reasons" given in NIE 11-8-73 for the breadth of Soviet strategic programs were a desire to accommodate internal drives and reservations about arms control and concerns about falling behind the US. In fact, the estimate concluded that while present Soviet activity "doubtless reflects in part" such drives and concerns, it "involves more than can be readily explained as merely trying to keep up with the competition." The estimate went on to assert that the Soviets almost certainly hope to improve their relative position vis-a-vis the US and that their objectives probably included "an opportunistic desire to press ahead and achieve a margin of superiority if they can."

--In its blanket condemnation of the strategic estimates, old and new, the B Team has virtually ignored the steadily increasing concern about the future implications of the scope, vigor, and persistence of Soviet strategic programs which the estimates have reflected over the past several years.

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--The B Team also ignores or dismisses the research the Intelligence Community has devoted to the key issues of air and missile defense, antisubmarine warfare, and advanced research and development generally, as well as to Soviet military concepts about nuclear war and to the arrangements and preparations within the Soviet military establishment for actually waging such a war should it occur.

5. Thus the B Team's principal quarrel with the estimates of the past several years, and especially the current one, would appear to be that they have not adopted, without qualification, the B Team's contention that Soviet actions in the strategic weapons field are almost exclusively attributable to a longstanding, single-minded effort to achieve a war-winning degree of strategic nuclear superiority. Differences exist between the Intelligence Community's conclusions and those of the B Team--and indeed among different elements of the Community--not because of any recent failure to study the "soft" data on basic Soviet strategic concepts and goals, as the B Team asserts, but rather because the Intelligence Community has also sought to take into account a broad range of additional classified and unclassified information on contemporary Soviet strategic thinking and decisionmaking. As a result, it has reached somewhat different conclusions about the motivations and circumstances shaping Soviet strategic programs, and especially about what the Soviets think they can realistically hope to accomplish during the next ten years.

6. Similarly, we believe the unwillingness of the Intelligence Community to adopt the "worst case" obiter dicta of the B Team on such questions as the performance and role of the Backfire, the likelihood that mobile IRBMs will be converted to ICBMs, and the extent of Soviet progress in such fields as ASW and ABM is not properly attributed to faulty methods and institutional bias, as the B Team alleges. It results from differing professional judgments as to what the technical and other evidence demonstrates about the present and potential capabilities of Soviet weapon systems and about how the Soviets themselves probably think they can most effectively employ them. Indeed, it is the B Team which appears to apply the questionable logic that pessimistic conclusions about overall Soviet political and policy goals legitimize and even necessitate uniformly

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pessimistic technical conclusions on what the Soviets are seeking and actually achieving with respect to particular weapon systems and forces.\*

7. We can find no basis for the charge that the estimates have been influenced by policy pressures and considerations--a charge which not only impugns the motives of the intelligence professionals concerned but also ignores a strong tradition among them against policy influence. The few specific references the B Team has made to possible instances of policy bias are unsubstantiated.

8. We believe that the B Team's charge of institutional bias in the estimates should be rejected on several counts:

--It grossly exaggerates the extent of bureaucratic rivalry between CIA analysts and their opposite numbers in other agencies, and the degree to which CIA's known professional skepticism represents bias against the view of any particular department.

--It ignores the fact that civilian control of the NIE language, which has always been diluted by the give and take of the coordination process, has been further modified in the current practice of using agencies other than CIA to provide drafts or task team chairmen for portions of the estimate.

--It ignores the fact that the right of dissent by any intelligence agency to any part of any estimate has always been a part of the NIE process, and that the final NIE comprises the findings of all participants, including those who register dissents.

--Thus it ignores the key role played by differing institutional viewpoints, and the checks and balances they provide, in assuring that the strategic estimates are the result of an informed debate in which differing analyses and interpretations of the evidence are fully aired.

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\* For our comments on these more technical aspects of the NIEs as portrayed by the B Team in Part Two of its report, see Annex.

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ANNEXCOMMENTS ON THE B TEAM'S  
"CRITIQUE OF NIE INTERPRETATIONS OF CERTAIN  
SOVIET STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS"

In Part Two of its report, the B Team on Soviet objectives discusses ten specific aspects of Soviet strategic force development which it believes the estimate to have underestimated or neglected. We briefly comment on each of these topics below.

Central Strategic Attack Systems

The B Team, like all critics for years, notes past underestimates of Soviet missile forces. These were indeed serious. Partly because of these misestimates, the 11-3/8 series has for some years presented a range of alternative future Soviet force levels and capabilities as a more effective way to assist US planners. The B Team fails to recognize this methodology and its importance.

Economic Constraints

In charging that admittedly low past estimates of the ruble costs of Soviet defense spending had a "serious warping effect" on the estimates, the B Team disregards the way in which they are generated and used. The NIE cost estimates are based on observations and estimates of forces and equipment physically present, and the magnitude of the Soviet effort is measured primarily in dollars--i.e., by how much it would cost to procure and maintain such forces in the US. Estimated ruble equivalents of these dollar costs are used only to depict the relative burden of military programs as compared with other Soviet expenditures.

The B Team's charges that the estimates overestimated the economic pressures to cut military spending (while underestimating, as noted above, the actual ruble burden of Soviet military programs) are true of the earlier estimates but no longer valid. Since Soviet resources are not unlimited we continue to believe that economic considerations place some outer limits on what is spent for military purposes or particular programs. In recent years, however, the estimates have stressed the high priority accorded military spending.

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The B Team also states that the evolution of NIE judgments on Soviet ABM program costs suggests "either an analytical blind spot or a policy influenced bias or both." What appears to concern the B Team is that the NIEs up through 1967 stressed the very heavy economic burden of an expanded ABM system while those from 1968 on did not, evidently suggesting to the B Team an effort to play up the likelihood that the Soviets would actually deploy additional ABMs. In fact, the change resulted from an analytical study, first reflected in the 1968 estimate, which indicated that if Soviet allocations of funds to ABM deployment were at all compatible with what the Soviets allotted to previous high priority weapon deployment programs, both the numbers deployed and the economic burden would be much lower than previously projected.

#### Civil Defense

We acknowledge that the Intelligence Community was slow to note and appreciate the growing scope of Soviet civil defense activities in the early 1970s and that the Community's disbelief in the effectiveness of the program as previously carried on--a view reaffirmed after a review of evidence in 1970--was probably affected by some "mirror-imaging." The B Team fails to indicate, however, that the Intelligence Community now fully recognizes the potential importance of the program, that an extensive interagency review of Soviet civil defense was undertaken last year in preparation for NIE 11-3/8-76, and that a greatly expanded collection and analysis effort is under way. We still believe that the B Team goes beyond what the evidence will support in its estimates of civil defense effectiveness and in its belief that the increased scope of civil defense was specifically linked with the decision in favor of ABM limits.

#### Military Hardening

We agree that the estimates have slighted Soviet programs to harden military command and control installations. We believe, however, that they should be considered in connection not only with civil defense preparations (some examples of which the B Team cites under the rubric of military hardening) but also with parallel programs to harden ICBM silos and launch facilities and other military facilities. We believe that these efforts to increase military survivability, like

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those undertaken by the US, contribute to deterrence as well as war-fighting ability. They are at least as valuable for assuring survivable retaliatory forces as for use in a first strike.

#### Mobile Missiles

We share the B Team's concerns that the SS-X-20 IRBM may be capable of fairly rapid conversion into the SS-X-16 ICBM. The SS-X-20 conversion possibility and the consequent "quick breakout" potential, as well as the difficulty of distinguishing mobile IRBMs from mobile ICBMs when deployed, are treated at some length in NIE 11-3/8-76. (The B Team's expectations of a high production run for the SS-X-16 are based on earlier Soviet plans which have not been fulfilled.)

#### Backfire

The B Team's complaints of one-sidedness in estimative treatment of the Backfire would appear to be applicable to its own extended recital of the arguments for considering the Backfire as an intercontinental bomber. No NIE has denied or obscured the fact that Backfire can reach the US. However, the Intelligence Community has also been obliged to present to policymakers, as evenhandedly as possible, the evidence and best judgments of its members on the specific capabilities and limitations of the aircraft in the intercontinental role, on its suitability for the peripheral role, and on any indications of how the Soviets actually plan to employ it. It is on the basis of these considerations that CIA and some other agencies have judged that Backfire was more suitable for, and more likely to be used in the peripheral role. Others in the Intelligence Community have different views and these views are given equal treatment in the NIE.

#### Antisatellite Testing

The B Team's presentation is generally consistent with ours as far as it goes. However, it discusses the problem almost exclusively in terms of non-nuclear orbital interception, ignoring other means of interference with US space systems such as electronic warfare, which a recent inter-agency study considered the most likely form of interference in situations short of major war. We also believe that the B Team's advice that we should lay greater stress on recognized Soviet technological capabilities than on identified

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ASAT systems takes insufficient account of the Soviet propensity to retain existing weapon systems even after new ones are introduced. Both existing capabilities and future possibilities are stressed in the NIEs and interagency intelligence memoranda.

### Strategic ASW

The logic chain the B Team uses to question the estimate of Soviet capabilities to counter the US SSBN force is no substitute for the thorough study of relevant technical issues on which the Intelligence Community based its judgments. We reject: (a) the B Team's unfounded charges that those responsible for the estimate were unaware of some of the key literature on the subject and had only "limited capacity" to "understand, analyze and assess" it; and (b) the insinuation that our conclusions "could well raise doubts" as to whether they were not deliberately slanted to "protect" the US SSBN program or to bolster the argument that the Soviets could never achieve militarily meaningful superiority. The B Team apparently misconstrued the NIE judgment that Soviet capabilities against the US SSBN force would remain limited as meaning that the estimate did not foresee any improvements at all in Soviet ASW systems and capabilities over the next ten years.

### ABM, Directed Energy and Strategic Defense

The B Team's point about the desirability of looking at strategic defense as a whole rather than broken down into separate categories is well taken. Otherwise, we find this section unpersuasive. The B Team's discussion of the estimative treatment of ABM ignores the fact that the estimates of ABM capabilities are based on detailed technical analyses rather than "implicit net assessments." Its argument for a SAM upgrade potential implies, misleadingly, that existing systems could be used as ABMs without further modification or testing. We do not know, for example, that the SA-2 and the SA-5 have been tested in ABM modes, although the Air Force has registered in the NIE its belief that the SA-5 may have been modified for ABM use without our detection.

As with its discussion of ASW capabilities, the B Team's sweeping conclusion that Soviet laser and CPB efforts in ABM are of a "magnitude that is difficult to overestimate" is not

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a substitute for technical analysis. While we acknowledge that there are differing intelligence views on whether Soviet directed-energy research is more ambitious and advanced than that of the US, debate on that subject within the Intelligence Community is based on intense professional study.

#### Non-Central Nuclear Systems

We agree that the recent practice of treating intercontinental and peripheral attack forces in separate estimates tends to obscure the fact that the Soviets regard both elements as strategic and lump them together organizationally and in their planning. While there is a continuing policy requirement for having Soviet forces presented in packages which correspond to those used in US force planning, more estimative attention should probably be given to those Soviet strategic force elements now classified as peripheral, and to their role in overall Soviet strategic planning. An interagency intelligence memorandum discussing Soviet strategic peripheral attack forces in some detail is in preparation.

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3 May 1977

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE DRAFT REPORT  
THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES - B TEAM EPISODE  
CONCERNING SOVIET STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES AND OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

--Critique the principal judgments and conduct of NIE 11-3/8-76 and the B Team report

--Recommend improvements on the quality and utility of future NIEs.

KEY FINDINGS ON THE NIE 11-3/8 SERIES

--They inadequately serve the needs of the President and senior policy-makers; they have performed a disservice.

--They fail to set strategic developments in a broader context of Soviet objectives, policies and other developments.

--They contained in their judgments subsumed net assessments done in an unacknowledged and amateurish fashion.

--Their preparation should make more extensive use of knowledge from outside the intelligence community.

--They reflect a preoccupation of the intelligence community (and the policymakers) with Soviet strategic weapons, and an allocation of resources to the subject disproportionate to other threats.

KEY FINDINGS ON THE B TEAM EXERCISE

--The B Team was not broadly representative and void of political pressure.

--The hard line B Team experiment was not constructive, and the press leaks undercut the integrity of the estimating process.

--It demonstrated the lack of an agreed US judgment about the reasons for Soviet strategic weapons developments (Soviet objectives).

--It demonstrated the need to improve the system of producing national estimates.

--It demonstrated <sup>that</sup> the subject of Soviet strategic objectives is an extraordinary problem for US policymakers calling for extraordinary remedy.

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORTOrganization to Produce National Estimates

--To be done by a widely representative, highly skilled, broadly experienced and continuing collegial body assisted by a similarly expert staff.

*Done* --Headed by a scholar or diplomat and composed mainly of new blood from outside the Intelligence Community.

--Supported by study groups occasionally convened by the President or the NSC to address critical questions.

*No* --Located close to the policymakers in downtown Washington.

The Relationship of Intelligence to Consumers

--Requirements for NIEs should be decided in close coordination with consumers by contacts at all policymaking levels made by active, imaginative leaders.

--The estimative body should accept questions from consumers but should be free of outside pressure or fear of uncongenial reception of their findings.

Format and Content of NIE 11-3/8 Series

*2* --Two versions--one for the President <sup>*did not*</sup> and one for the bureaucracy. *E Summ*

--Improved editorial standards.

--Full expression of differing judgments and their bases.

--Clear expression of change from previous estimates.

--Depiction of Soviet military developments so that they may be seen within the total context of Soviet life and policies and US and world developments.

--Each NIE fully self contained.

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*0* --Sophisticated objective net assessments conducted at the national (NSC) level (implied but not stated, that the NIE should not contain net assessments).

--NIE post-mortem to adjust collection and research.

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17 December 1980

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

1. Origins of the Experiment. The experiment in competitive analysis was undertaken in parallel with the preparation of the 1976 National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict (NIE 11-3/8-76), at the request of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). It was the Board's view that NIEs on Soviet Forces for intercontinental conflict contained a number of substantive deficiencies, and projected a sense of complacency in regard to the Soviet threat, unsupported by the facts. As a corrective, Board members Dr. John Foster and Dr. Edward Teller, drawing upon their experience in the competitive programs of Los Alamos and Livermore Laboratories in the development of hydrogen weapons, proposed that competitive analysis be incorporated into the national intelligence production process. To test this concept the PFIAB proposed that the DCI conduct an experiment in competitive analysis on three subjects addressed in the annual NIE--Soviet strategic objectives, ICBM accuracies, and low altitude air defenses.

2. Although the DCI agreed to conduct the experiment, he did not accept the Board's findings. He believed that, while earlier NIEs could be faulted for underestimation of the Soviet threat, estimates from 1973 on had accurately reflected the scope and drive of Soviet military programs. An analysis of the general threat and tone of the NIE 11-3/8 series from 1970 to 1980 is included in Attachment 1.

3. The Nature of the Experiment. The methods, procedures, and objectives for conducting the experiment were worked out between the Director of Central Intelligence and the PFIAB and were coordinated with General Scowcroft--the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

--The 1976 estimate of Soviet forces for intercontinental conflict was to be prepared in accordance with established Community practices. Those working on the estimate were referred to as the A Team.

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--With respect to three key issues selected, B teams were to be formed of experts, drawn from inside or outside of government who were known to hold a more somber view about the subjects they were to address than conveyed in previous NIEs. The B Team members were selected after consultation with Drs. Foster and Teller.

--The A and B teams were to have the same body of information available to them.

--The B teams were expected to marshall the evidence, rationale and arguments supporting more threatening interpretations than appearing in past NIEs even though such interpretations might be considered less likely than the NIE findings.

--Prior to finalizing the 1977 NIE the A and B teams met to discuss their findings.

4. From the outset the experiment was designed to test the hypothesis--using the same evidence as that available to the Intelligence Community--that either the range of uncertainty around selected Soviet threat parameters (ICBM accuracy, low altitude air defense capabilities) was such that the threat could be greater than that reflected in the National Estimates. On the subject of Soviet strategic objectives, the experiment was to test the hypothesis that the Soviets were pursuing a more comprehensive and systematic program for a dominant military capability than they were being credited with in the NIEs. Despite statements in the media to the contrary, the experiment was carried out professionally and according to the original plans, although one B Team moved to a broader terms of reference (see below).

#### 5. The Findings

a. The B Team on ICBM accuracies concluded that Soviet accelerometer quality on the SS-18 and SS-19 (a key parameter in assessment of missile accuracy) [redacted] rather than [redacted] assessed by the Intelligence Community. It turned out to be [redacted] Current Soviet ICBMs are not as accurate as forecast by the B Team but more accurate than estimated in the 1976 NIE.

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b. The B Team report on air defenses was useful for its identification of critical uncertainties in our assessments of Soviet low altitude defense capabilities. Its main thesis--that Soviet air defenses could be much more effective than judged in the NIE--has not been confirmed by subsequent evidence or analysis, although, uncertainties remain in our largely subjective assessments of the overall effectiveness of Soviet air defenses.

c. Of the three B Team reports the one on Soviet strategic objectives received the greatest attention among Administration officials, the Congress and the media. The two reports differed in their scope and content.

--The A Team, in Chapter I of the NIE 11-3/8-76, estimated Soviet objectives for strategic nuclear forces for intercontinental conflict through the mid-1980s. The B Team report addressed Soviet strategic objectives in the broader context of all elements of the USSR's national power and estimated overall Soviet political and military goals to be achieved at some indefinite time in the future. The B Team contended that the failure of the NIE drafters in the past to recognize or to address the true nature of Soviet strategic objectives has resulted in underestimates of Soviet forces.

--Half of the B Team report consisted of a critique of certain Soviet strategic developments dating back to the 1960s which, in the opinion of the B Team, were either misinterpreted or discussed too lightly in NIEs. This section of the report was intended to provide examples supporting the B Team position that past NIEs were based on incorrect assumptions and to provide part of the evidential basis for the B Team's own conclusions about Soviet strategic objectives. Some of the B Team assessments of these past developments were consistent with intelligence findings, some were not and some remain to be affirmed or denied by evidence.

6. Soviet Strategic Objectives--Comparison of A and B Team Reports. The bottom line judgments of the B Team about Soviet strategic objectives are very close to those in the NIE, as indicated in the attached comparisons of the findings of the two reports. (Attachment 2) Some of the B Team conclusions went beyond the scope of NIE 11-3/8-76; in the attachment these findings are compared with the judgments in a subsequent estimate, NIE 11-4-78, "Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena."

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7. Despite the similarities in key judgments the B Team report conveys a much more strident tone than either NIE 11-3/8-76 and NIE 11-4-78. The B Team dutifully carried out its charge to assume an adversarial position--to marshal the evidence in support of more threatening interpretations of Soviet objectives. On the other hand, the A Team product was not an essay with a single theme; it was a national estimate which attempted to review the evidence objectively, citing the uncertainties which qualified its conclusions. Moreover, the A Team itself was split; its report expressed a range of views among the intelligence agencies. In light of the aggressiveness of Soviet conduct since 1976, the B Team report, because of its tone and the billboard effect of its interpretations of overall Soviet policies and objectives, could be regarded now as a more effective statement than findings in the NIEs, even though the conclusions of the A Team and B Team were quite similar. [REDACTED]

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8. Impact of the B Team Reports on NIE 11-3/8-76. There have been misunderstandings about the effect of the B Team's findings on National Intelligence Estimates. In general, the Intelligence Community benefitted from the experience of having its findings challenged by groups of experts. In part as a result of the experiment, the DCI established panels of consultants to review and critique drafts of National Intelligence Estimates. The experience also indicated that it was not practical to pattern the national intelligence production process according to the procedures followed in the experiment. Contrary to allegations appearing in the press, the judgments in the 1976 NIE were not shaped by pressures from the B Team. A memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence, George Bush, to all recipients of NIE 11-3/8-76 (Attachment 3) denied the press allegations.

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[REDACTED]

David S. Brandwein  
National Intelligence Officer  
for Strategic Programs

Attachments

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## ATTACHMENT 1

NIE "Tone" During the 1970s

1. Over the past decade the tone of NIEs on Soviet capabilities for intercontinental nuclear warfare have become increasingly somber, a trend which began in 1968. This shift has resulted largely from the accumulating evidence of steady and persistent Soviet efforts to improve all aspects of their strategic forces and supporting elements. Four phases can be identified over the past ten years in which there were some distinct changes in expressions of our perceptions and concern about the magnitude, pace, and objectives of Soviet strategic programs:

a. NIE 11-8-70: more sanguine in tone about the Soviet strategic threat, in comparison to later years. Characterized Soviet strategic programs as an effort to catch-up or "rectify the imbalance" with the US in strategic forces.

b. NIE 11-8-73: a clear expression of concern about the direction and pace of Soviet strategic programs. It noted that the Soviet build-up could not be explained solely in terms of trying to achieve parity with the US.

c. NIE 11-3/8-75: raised the question of whether the Soviets are, in fact, seeking clear strategic superiority over the US. It observed that Soviet strategic programs have moved well beyond the minimum requirement for deterrence.

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d. NIE 11-3/8-78: strengthened and reiterated previous substantive judgments about Soviet strategic objectives and programs. Its description of specific developments conveyed a tone of greater concern, noting that aspects of this build-up are coming to fruition faster than we had expected.

Each of these phases is examined in more detail below.

2. NIE 11-8-70 through 72: These estimates recognized the build-up in Soviet strategic forces, but ascribed somewhat modest goals to the Soviets as explanation for this buildup. The tone of these estimates--carried over each year in virtually identical text--were, therefore, more sanguine in comparison to later NIE editions on the subject of Soviet strategic doctrine and programs.

Each estimate asserted that "The broader reasons for the USSR's energetic buildup of intercontinental attack forces are neither complex nor obscure." (1970, para. M) The Soviets essentially want to catch up and stay up with the US, after being so conspicuously inferior to their rival in the early 1960s. "Consequently, they set themselves to rectify the imbalance--to achieve at a minimum a relation of rough parity" (1970, para. M)... "It has been evident for some time that an important Soviet objective has been achievement of a position of acknowledged strategic parity with the US." (1970, para. 11) Further, "Soviet leaders (apparently) think that they have now achieved this position, or are about to achieve it, at least in respect to weapons of intercontinental range." (1970, para. M)

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After the SAL Interim Agreement was signed, NIE 11-8-72 concluded that "For military and political reasons, the Soviet leaders will wish at least to keep pace with the US. Also the leadership has a personal and political stake in insuring that the USSR suffers no real or apparent erosion of its relative position." (1972, para. S)

On the question of whether the Soviets might, in fact, be seeking superiority over--not just parity with--the US, the following judgment was made in these Estimates:

"It seems clear that the Soviet leaders intend to maintain at minimum such forces as will continue to give them a sense of equal security with the US. The general attitudes and policies of the USSR being what they are it might seem obvious to infer that they will strive to exceed that minimum and to achieve marked superiority over the US in strategic weaponry. We do not doubt that they would like to attain such a position, but the question is whether they consider it a feasible objective, particularly in the light of the arms limitation agreements. They might think it feasible to seek a strategic posture that, while falling short of marked superiority, makes clear that the Soviets have advantages over the US in certain specific areas. Whether or not such advantages are significant militarily, they would help to dramatize the strategic power of the Soviet Union." (1972, para. Q)

Rather than attempting to achieve "marked superiority" over the US, Soviet strategic programs were viewed as largely reactive to US efforts in this area:

"But even if Soviet intentions go no further than maintenance of 'equal security,' their arms programs are bound to be vigorous and demanding. This is in part because Soviet leaders must have an eye not to what forces the US has at present, but to what it can have, or may have, in future years. In this respect, they are likely to be cautious--to overestimate rather than underestimate the US threat. Moreover, the weapons competition nowadays is largely a technological race; the USSR is impelled to press forward its research and development lest it be left behind. Soviet weapon programs also tend to attain a momentum of their own; the immense apparatus of organizations, installations, personnel, vested interests, and so on, tends to proceed in its endeavors unless checked by some decisive political authority." (1971, para. S)...

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"Soviet leaders must also consider how far they may wish to press their own programs lest they provoke countervailing programs in the US. And they must assess not only the present and future US threat but also that from China, and elsewhere." (1971, para. T)...

"As a result of the SAL accords, the main questions about the future of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack center more than ever on the pace and scope of technological change. Also as a consequence of the accords, and of the opportunities and risks they present, future strategic programming decisions will probably be even more directly influenced than in the past by the Soviet leadership's sense of stability or change in its strategic relationship with the US. To be sure, as China moves closer to establishing a credible nuclear force, the need to counter Chinese capabilities will also affect Soviet plans. For many years to come, however, Soviet planning of strategic offensive weapons is likely to be concerned primarily with the US arsenal, in terms both of the strategic threat it poses and the diplomatic and political leverage it affords." (1972, para. X)

Another theme during this phase concerned the factors which might moderate Soviet weapon programs:

"The most obvious is economic; resources are not unbounded; the civilian economy demands its share; one weapon system competes with another for allocations; and intercontinental attack forces compete with strategic defense and general purpose forces." (1971, para. T)

Finally,

"In the context of arms control, other pressures for moderation will be at work. The SAL agreements have been hailed in the USSR as a successful manifestation of the current Soviet policy of detente; consequently there will be incentives to avoid actions which, though not actually violating the agreements, might jeopardize them."

## 2. NIE 11-8-73 through 74:

a. A clear expression of concern about the direction and pace of Soviet strategic programs was made in NIE 11-3/8-73, and essentially elaborated in 1974.

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"The Soviets are now well into a broad range of programs to augment, modernize, and improve their forces for intercontinental attack. This round of programs...was conceived long before the Interim Agreement was signed...and most of the programs involved were already evident or foreseeable at that time. Nevertheless, they represent a breadth and concurrency of effort which is unprecedented, particularly in the field of ICBM development. Questions thus arise concerning Soviet willingness to accept additional limitations on their intercontinental attack forces and the potential effect on the strategic balance if such limitations are not imposed." (1973, Summary volume, page 1, para. 1)

The theme expressed in earlier estimates that the Soviets are striving toward "strategic parity" was altered:

"...the present Soviet effort involves more than can readily be explained as merely trying to keep up with the competition." (1973, Summary volume, page 3, para. 2)... "Soviet actions almost certainly reflect a hope that vigorous pursuit of their opportunities under the Interim Agreement...will enable them to improve their relative position vis-a-vis the US. Though they have probably not decided whether they could get away with it, their objectives probably include an opportunistic desire to press ahead and achieve a margin of superiority if they can." (1973, Summary volume, page 4, para. 2)...

"Except with a minimal effort, however, the Soviets, if unconstrained, are likely by the early 1980s to surpass programmed US forces in numbers of missile RVs and increase their considerable superiority in missile throw-weight, while retaining their advantage in numbers of delivery vehicles. These static measures of strategic power would convey an image of a margin of Soviet superiority to those who ascribe high significance to these measures.

"In sum, the Soviets have been laying the groundwork for very substantial improvements in already large and formidable intercontinental attack forces. This process is not yet irreversible, and the Soviets may prove willing to accept some curbs on it within the broader context of their detente policy. Nevertheless, they have shown little disposition to exercise voluntary restraint." (1973, Summary volume, page 4, para. 3)

The "reactive" aspect, ascribed earlier as a motive for their strategic development programs, was, in effect, reversed--it was now up to the US to restrain the USSR in its arms buildup:

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"How far the Soviets will go in carrying out current programs will depend in the first instance on the outcome of SALT II and, in particular, on how successful the US is in persuading them that they cannot have both substantially improving strategic capabilities and the benefits of detente, simultaneously and indefinitely; that unrestrained pursuit of present programs will provoke offsetting US reactions which could jeopardize their competitive position; and that restraint on their part would be reciprocated." (1973, Summary volume, page 4, para. 4)

b. NIE 11-3/8-74 generally carried over the tone of the previous year's estimate, including the somewhat equivocal judgment on the question of "superiority."

"The Soviets are pressing ahead with a broad range of programs for the near-term deployment of much improved offensive systems for intercontinental conflict, are gradually improving their deployed strategic defenses, and are vigorously pursuing the development of advanced technology applicable to strategic forces (1974, Volume I, page 2, para. 1)

...they probably do not expect detente or SALT to face them with pressures sufficient to alter their near-term deployment plans in any major way. They evidently see no contradiction between their current strategic programs and their detente policies. (1974, Volume I, page 3, para. 2)

We doubt that the Soviets have firmly settled on acceptance of strategic parity or have decided to seek clear-cut strategic superiority. The concept of superiority in Soviet military doctrine is ill defined and is probably contested. In making the practical choices they confront, however, we believe that the Soviet leadership is pursuing a strategic policy which is both prudent and opportunistic--a policy aimed at assuring no less than comprehensive equality with the US and at the same time seeking to attain a margin of strategic advantage if US behavior permits." (1974, Volume I, page 3, para. 4)

The intelligence organizations of the military services took an alternative view concerning the Soviet quest for strategic superiority, stating their belief "that the USSR is fully committed to a policy of achieving strategic superiority over the United States and its allies in the years ahead." (1974, Volume I, page 3, footnote)

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The estimate forecast developments over the next ten years--within SALT limitations--disadvantageous to the US. These developments would provide the Soviets:

--By about 1980, with the present new systems, a lead over the US in most quantitative measures of offensive forces;

--In the 1980s, with improved or follow-on systems, a potential capability to destroy a large percentage of US Minuteman silos;

--An appearance of overcoming the US lead in such qualitative aspects of strategic forces as MIRV technology." (1974, Volume I, page 4, para. 3)

It cautioned about major technological advances in the future:

"We do not foresee technological advances which would sharply alter the strategic balance in the USSR's favor in the next ten years. Nevertheless, the scope and vigor of Soviet research and development, particularly in strategic defensive systems bear especially close watching in the years ahead." (1974, Volume I, page 5, para. 1)

The estimate was somewhat pessimistic concerning Soviet restraint in future arms acquisitions:

"In the coming years, uncertainties faced by each side in assessing the capabilities of the other's future forces, particularly their qualitative characteristics, will tend to magnify more fundamental uncertainties and fears about the other side's strategic objectives. Unless such a strategic environment is significantly changed by arms limitation agreements, it is likely that the Soviet leaders will continue to believe that the acquisition of more and better strategic armaments is their best course." (1974, Volume I, page 5, paras. 3-4)

Finally, in contrast to judgments of the early 1970s, NIE 11-3/8-74 was doubtful that economic constraints would affect Soviet strategic force development:

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"...while some leaders have expressed concern over the burden of defense, there is little evidence that the leadership finds the burden unacceptable or that the USSR would forego, for purely economic reasons, military programs the leaders regard as important." (1974, Volume II, para. 13)

3. NIE 11-3/8-75 through 1977:

a. The tone of NIE 11-3/8-75 reflected yet another "watershed" concerning judgments of Soviet intentions underlying their strategic buildup. There now was an expression of clear concern about the Soviet desire for "superiority," in contrast to the relatively more modest goals ("opportunism," "margin of superiority") ascribed to them in the previous two estimates:

"Much that we observe in their present posture and programs can be attributed to a combination of traditional defense prudence, a military doctrine which stresses war-fighting capabilities, superpower competitiveness, worst-case assumptions about US capabilities, and a variety of internal political and institutional factors. But the scope and vigor of these programs, at a time when the USSR has achieved a powerful deterrent as well as recognition as the strategic equal of the US, raise the elusive question of whether the Soviet leaders embrace as an objective some form of strategic nuclear superiority over the US...

...they are probably striving for a strategic posture which has some visible and, therefore, political useful advantage over the US and which would give the USSR better capabilities than the US to fight a nuclear war." (1975, Volume I, page 5, paras. 1-2)

It noted that recent developments in Soviet strategic programs "...follow more than a decade of large-scale deployment and modernization programs which have moved Soviet strategic forces well beyond the minimum requirements of deterrence." (1975, Volume I, page 11, para. 2) It highlighted, as one of several motives underlying Soviet strategic force improvement, their desire "to improve war-fighting capabilities."

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aimed at the survival of the USSR as a national entity should deterrence fail." (1975, Volume I, page 5, para. 3) It noted that:

"At a minimum, Soviet leaders view improvements to their strategic nuclear capabilities as strengthening the foundation of the USSR's superpower status. They believe that the growth of Soviet strategic power, along with political and economic events has helped create a new 'correlation of forces' more favorable to the USSR.... In the event of direct superpower confrontation the Soviets expect their strategic power to enhance the prospect of favorable outcomes while reducing the likelihood of nuclear war." (1975, Volume I, page 11, para. 3)

b. NIE 11-3/8-76 generally reiterated the views of the previous year on Soviet strategic objectives:

"...the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet strategic programs gives rise to the question of whether the Soviet leaders now hold as an operative, practical objective the achievement of clear strategic superiority over the US within the next decade. (1976, Volume I, page 22, para. 20)

Soviet expectations "...clearly reach well beyond a capability for intercontinental conflict that merely continues to be sufficient to deter an all-out attack. (1976, Volume I, page 22, para 22)

In our view, the Soviets are striving to achieve a war-fighting and war-survival posture which would leave the USSR in a better position than the US if war occurred. The Soviets also aim for intercontinental forces which have visible and therefore politically useful advantages over the US. They hope that their capabilities for intercontinental conflict will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that these capabilities will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to influence Soviet actions." (1976, Volume I, page 22, para 23)

In the 1976 Estimate, however, there were dissenting views on the subject of the intentions underlying Soviet strategic programs--a more moderate view on the one hand (State); a more pessimistic view on the other (DIA, ERDA, and the Military Services). The Air Force also made a further dissent. According

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to the State Department, the

"...Soviet leaders have more modest expectations for their strategic programs... (they) do not entertain as a practical objective in the foreseeable future, the achievement of what could reasonably be characterized as a 'war-winning' or 'war-survival' posture. Rather...Soviet strategic weapon programs are pragmatic in nature and are guided by more proximate foreign policy goals." (1976, Volume I, page 22, para 24)

In the view of DIA, et al,

"...the Soviets do, in fact, see as attainable their objective of achieving the capability to wage an intercontinental nuclear war, should such a war occur, and survive it with resources sufficient to dominate the postwar period. Further...this objective serves as a practical guideline for Soviet strategic force development...." (1976, Volume I, page 23, para. 25)

In a further view of the Air Force,

"...this Estimate understates, as have previous NIEs, the Soviet drive for strategic superiority...the US (is) in a position of serious strategic disadvantage...(Soviet) detente, economic, and arms-control diplomacy have thus far been exploited by them for strategic advantage.... While the present NIE is much improved over some of its predecessor documents, it falls far short of grasping the essential realities of Soviet conflict purpose and evolving capability, the latter clearly constituting the most extensive peacetime war preparations in recorded history...." (1976, Volume I, page 23, paras 26-29)

c. NIE 11-3/8-77 basically carried over the theme and tone of the previous two years, noting that "...it appears that the Soviets have largely completed the expansion phase which established the size and composition of the strategic nuclear forces they now possess. Now a new phase emphasizing technological improvement is well under way.... It also appears...that the present phase stresses operational flexibility while maintaining highly centralized control." (1977, Volume I, page 1, para. 3)

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This Estimate also asserted that perceptions of further Soviet force improvements are likely to be influenced by the status of US efforts in this area:

"...it seems clear that, for at least the next few years, the general picture will be one of a Soviet Union continuing both to deploy and to develop improved systems which increase its overall strategic capabilities, while the US effort remains largely developmental. ...there is likely to be a perception of continued Soviet momentum and of strategic trends unfavorable to the United States and its allies." (1977, Volume I, page 2, para 6)

4. NIE 11-3/8-78 through 1979:

a. NIE 11-3/8-78 could be considered another "benchmark" in the tone of estimates during the decade. It reiterated and strengthened the substantive judgments made in previous NIEs, about Soviet strategic objectives and programs, but the description of specific developments conveyed a tone of greater concern. It asserted "...that some near-term Soviet advances will be greater than we had foreseen." (1978, Volume I, page 1, para. 1) Specifically,

"The Soviets are flight-testing modified ICBMs with MIRVs...that are considerably more accurate than currently deployed versions. ...(which) probably will start to be deployed in 1979. We had expected such accuracy improvements, but not until the advent of new ICBMs several years later."

Also,

"...the number of missile RVs in the USSR's intercontinental striking forces will probably increase considerably more rapidly in the next few years than we had expected. At the same time, the United States now anticipates some slippages in its own new programs. We now estimate that for a few years in the early-to-mid-1980s, the USSR is likely to match or slightly surpass the

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United States in total online intercontinental offensive weapons--that is, in online ICBM and SLBM reentry vehicles and bomber weapons combined." (1978, Volume I, page 1, para. 2)

It also cited activities in Soviet air defenses and developments which "...lead us to believe that in the 1980s the Soviets will place increasing emphasis on improving their defenses, especially against bombers and cruise missiles at low altitudes." (1978, Volume I, page 2, para. 2)

The Estimate listed other developments which "...show that Soviet strategic programs have neither narrowed in scope nor slackened in pace." (1978, Volume I, page 3, para. 3)

In highlighting the implications of these developments, NIE 11-3/8-78 maintained that "...the early-to-mid-1980s will be a period in which Soviet intercontinental offensive capabilities are further improved relative to those of the West." Further, Soviet achievements, combined with some slippages in US programs, "...lead us to believe that this period will arrive sooner and last longer than previously anticipated." (1978 Volume I, page 4, para. 4)

Finally, in discussing Soviet nuclear war-fighting capabilities, the judgment was made that

"...they evidently...rate as poor the USSR's prospects of winning a nuclear war with the United States in any meaningful

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sense. The scope and nature of Soviet development and deployment programs in offensive and defensive forces, in passive defense, and in supporting elements, however, suggest that the Soviet leaders do not see this situation as necessarily permanent." (1978, Volume I, page 31, para. 4)

b. NIE 11-3/8-79 reinforced the themes of the previous year, noting that: "The number of weapons with good counterforce capabilities is increasing rapidly" (1979, Volume I, page 5, para 15); that they "...are steadily improving the survivability of their strategic forces and supporting elements" (1979, Volume I, page 6, para 16); and that they "are adding to their capabilities for flexible employment of strategic nuclear forces under a variety of circumstances." (1979, Volume I, page 6, para 17)

Moreover, little likelihood of restraint was foreseen in their future improvements:

"Several major factors lead us to believe that the Soviets are not likely to alter significantly their commitment to long-term strategic force improvements....

Thus we believe that, while seeking to slow or halt US and NATO weapon programs, the Soviets will at the same time initiate and continue programs designed to overcome current weaknesses, especially in their strategic defenses, and to give themselves options to counter the prospective Western programs." (1979, Volume I, page 5, para 13)

There were, however, dissenting views on the implications of Soviet force improvements for the conduct of their foreign policy. According to CIA:

"The Soviets probably view their improved strategic position as providing a more favorable backdrop than before to the conduct

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of an assertive foreign policy and to the projection of Soviet power abroad. They probably do not see the present situation of approximate strategic nuclear parity as providing them with the latitude to safely confront the United States directly in areas where they perceive US vital interests to be involved. However, in areas that they believe the United States regards as less central to its interests, particularly in regions where the USSR enjoys a preponderance of conventional forces and the advantage of proximity, such as Afghanistan, the current strategic relationship probably enhances Soviet confidence that the risk of a US local or escalatory military response would be negligible." (1979, Volume I, page 4, para. 7)

In an alternative, more pessimistic view, held by DIA and the military services, the belief was stated that:

"...the increasing aggressiveness of Soviet foreign policy will expand as the Soviet Union's advantages in strategic nuclear forces become more pronounced. The Soviets may now perceive that they have nuclear superiority. As they see this superiority increase during the next three to five year, they will probably attempt to secure maximum political advantages from their military arsenal in anticipation of US force modernization programs. Moreover, the holders of this view sense that the Soviet leadership remains uncertain about the bounding of US national interests and American resolve to meet challenges to these interests. If such uncertainties continue, there is the distinct danger that the USSR may grossly miscalculate US reactions during a regional crisis and thus set the stage for a serious military confrontation between the superpowers." (1979, Volume I, page 4 para. 8)

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## ATTACHMENT 2

The Team A - Team B ExperimentSoviet Strategic Objectives

1. An evaluation of the conclusions of Team A and Team B requires consideration of the roles of the two teams in the experiment. While the experiment involved competing analyses, it was not an adversarial process. The B Team carried out exactly the task of an adversary according to its charge, that is, it marshalled the evidence in support of a more threatening interpretations than in the NIEs. The product of Team A, however, was not that of an adversary. The product was not an essay in which the evidence was interpreted and presented to give support in each paragraph for a common theme. The Team A report was a national estimate, which attempted to present an objective assessment of the subject weighing the evidence and citing uncertainties related to its conclusions. This difference in approach resulted in a different tone in the findings of the two teams. [ ]

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2. This tonal difference is not clearly evident in the brief summary below comparing the conclusions of NIE 11-3/8-76, the Team A report, and of the Team B report. To answer the question completely, the comparisons below also include judgments from NIE 11-4-78, "Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena," because the Team B report contained conclusions which went beyond the scope of the Team A report in NIE 11-3/8-76. The findings cited below (abbreviated but retaining the operative words) were drawn from only the key judgments of the three reports:

Comparison of Team A and Team B ConclusionsTeam B ConclusionsTeam A Conclusions

(findings from NIE 11-4-78 are shown in parenthesis)

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Team B Conclusions

Seek a strategic nuclear environment in which other instruments of power can be brought to bear

Seek to assure that if deterrence failed, Soviets could resort to nuclear weapons to fight and win a nuclear war; think in terms of effective war fighting capabilities.

No evidence Soviets willing to reduce military budget to raise standard of living.

Should the global correlation of forces shift in Soviets' favor they would act with less concern about US sensitivities. Evidence of Soviet willingness to take increased risks (e.g. in Middle East) may be a harbinger of what lies ahead.

Scope and intensity of Soviet military programs could lead to short term threat cresting in 1980 to 1983.

Undeviating commitment to triumph of socialism, global hegemony.

Team A Conclusions

Hope their strategic nuclear capabilities will give them more latitude for vigorous pursuit of foreign policy

Striving to achieve war-fighting, war-survival capabilities that would leave them in better position than US if war occurred.

In future Soviets might shift allocation of resources between military and civilian sectors but no sign Soviet leaders preparing for such a shift.

Hope strategic forces will give them more latitude for virorous pursuit of foreign policy, discouraging US use or threatened use of force to influence Soviet actions. (Prognosis for 1980s: purposeful, cautions exploration of USSRs increased military strength; more stalwart in defense of USSRs interests; assert right to search for new beachheads of USSR influence; more assertiveness; greatly enhanced military capabilities.)

Strength of Soviet offensive force will be greatest relative to the US in early 1980s. (By early 1980s Soviets could have marginal advantage over US in strategic nuclear capabilities.)

Strategic forces contribute to Soviet goal of achieving dominant posture over West--in political, economic, social and military strength.

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Team B Conclusions

For Soviets, peaceful coexistence or detente involves penetration and weakening of capitalist zone, strengthening hold on socialist camp, and intense build-up of all types of military forces.

Soviet concern with China will not deter USSR from increasingly aggressive policies toward West.

Soviet leaders determined to achieve maximum possible measure of strategic superiority over the US. Place high priority on attaining war-fighting and war-winning capability and may feel attaining it is within their grasp. Gap between long term aspirations and short term objectives is closing.

If Soviets can't achieve capabilities that would give them substantial pre-dominance over the US following general nuclear war, they intend to acquire war-fighting advantage such that they would be less deterred than US from initiating use of nuclear weapons; be able to exploit local military advantages with out fear of US initiated escalation.

Soviets unrestrained in strategic programs by "how much is enough."

Team A Conclusions

(Soviets see program of detente due to growth in USSR military power; detente is the management of change to constrain as little as possible Soviet gains; does not constrain pursuit of competitive advantages.)

(Soviets see sweep of postwar international affairs confirming their convictions about march of history; even defection of China has not undermined these convictions.)

Soviet military effort raises question of whether seeking clear strategic superiority over US. May be optimistic about strategic competition with West, but cannot be certain about US behavior. Cannot set practical objectives for some specific relationship in strategic forces to be achieved in some specific period.

Expectations reach well beyond capability merely to deter an all-out US attack. Soviets seeking war-fighting and war-survival capabilities to leave USSR in stronger position than US; to provide visible and politically useful advantages, giving them more latitude for vigorous pursuit of foreign policy, discouraging US use or threatened use of force to influence Soviet actions.

(War-fighting requirement calls for unremitting effort which is required for confident superiority over NATO)

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Team B Conclusions

Within next 10 years expect degree of Soviet military superiority permitting dramatically more aggressive pursuit of hegemonial objectives.

Team A Conclusions

(Post Brezhnev leadership may see superpower status and costly military efforts as basis for more pervasive leverage on world affairs.) (S)

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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

## ATTACHMENT 3

MEMORANDUM FOR: Recipients of National Intelligence Estimate  
11-3/8-76, "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental  
Conflict Through the Mid-1980s"

FROM George Bush

1. The attached National Intelligence Estimate is the official appraisal of the Director of Central Intelligence. This Estimate, including its italicized statements of differing views by members of The National Foreign Intelligence Board, was drafted and coordinated by professional intelligence officers of the US Intelligence Community and was approved by me with the advice of the Board.

2. The judgments arrived at in this Estimate were made after all parties to the Estimate had the benefit of alternative views from the various elements of the Community and from panels of experts from outside government on a few selected subjects. The assembling of the panels of outside experts, and the consideration of their views, was agreed upon by me and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board as an experiment, the purpose of which was to determine whether those known for their more somber views of Soviet capabilities and objectives could present the evidence in a sufficiently convincing way to alter the analytical judgments that otherwise would have been presented in the attached document. The views of these experts did have some effect. But to the extent that this Estimate presents a starker appreciation of Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives, it is but the latest in a series of estimates that have done so as evidence has accumulated on the continuing persistence and vigor of Soviet programs in the strategic offensive and defensive fields.

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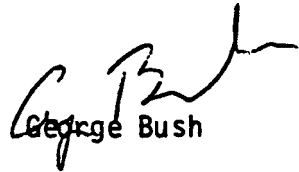
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3. The experiment in competitive analysis that was begun with this Estimate has not been completed, and any final judgment on its utility cannot be rendered. Nevertheless, there is a negative aspect that is already clear and which concerns me deeply; namely, the selective leaks regarding the details of the process and, worse, the substantive conclusions developed by the "Team B" panel that was concerned with Soviet strategic objectives. Inspired by these selective leaks, allegations have appeared in the press that the judgments appearing in this official Estimate were shaped by pressure from the "Team B."

4. There is no truth to such allegations. The judgments in the attached Estimate are the best that can be made on the basis of the analysis of the available evidence.

5. Although these leaks may appear to discredit what I continue to regard as a worthwhile experiment, they have not diminished the integrity of the Estimate itself, nor the integrity of the Intelligence Community.

  
George Bush

Attachment

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17 December 1980

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

1. Origins of the Experiment. The experiment in competitive analysis was undertaken in parallel with the preparation of the 1976 National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict (NIE 11-3/8-76), at the request of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). It was the Board's view that NIEs on Soviet Forces for intercontinental conflict contained a number of substantive deficiencies, and projected a sense of complacency in regard to the Soviet threat, unsupported by the facts. As a corrective, Board members Dr. John Foster and Dr. Edward Teller, drawing upon their experience in the competitive programs of Los Alamos and Livermore Laboratories in the development of hydrogen weapons, proposed that competitive analysis be incorporated into the national intelligence production process. To test this concept the PFIAB proposed that the DCI conduct an experiment in competitive analysis on three subjects addressed in the annual NIE--Soviet strategic objectives, ICBM accuracies, and low altitude air defenses.

2. Although the DCI agreed to conduct the experiment, he did not accept the Board's findings. He believed that, while earlier NIEs could be faulted for underestimation of the Soviet threat, estimates from 1973 on had accurately reflected the scope and drive of Soviet military programs. An analysis of the general threat and tone of the NIE 11-3/8 series from 1970 to 1980 is included in Attachment 1.

3. The Nature of the Experiment. The methods, procedures, and objectives for conducting the experiment were worked out between the Director of Central Intelligence and the PFIAB and were coordinated with General Scowcroft--the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

--The 1976 estimate of Soviet forces for intercontinental conflict was to be prepared in accordance with established Community practices. Those working on the estimate were referred to as the A Team.

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SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

--With respect to three key issues selected, B teams were to be formed of experts, drawn from inside or outside of government who were known to hold a more somber view about the subjects they were to address than conveyed in previous NIEs. The B Team members were selected after consultation with Drs. Foster and Teller.

--The A and B teams were to have the same body of information available to them.

--The B teams were expected to marshall the evidence, rationale and arguments supporting more threatening interpretations than appearing in past NIEs even though such interpretations might be considered less likely than the NIE findings.

--Prior to finalizing the 1976 NIE the A and B teams met to discuss their findings.

4. From the outset the experiment was designed to test the hypothesis--using the same evidence as that available to the Intelligence Community--that the range of uncertainty around selected Soviet threat parameters (ICBM accuracy, low altitude air defense capabilities) was such that the threat could be greater than that reflected in the National Estimates. On the subject of Soviet strategic objectives, the experiment was to test the hypothesis that the Soviets were pursuing a more comprehensive and systematic program for a dominant military capability than they were being credited with in the NIEs. Despite statements in the media to the contrary, the experiment was carried out professionally and according to the original plans, although one B Team moved to a broader terms of reference (see below).

#### 5. The Findings

a. The B Team on ICBM accuracies concluded that Soviet accelerometer quality on the SS-18 and SS-19 (a key parameter in assessment of missile accuracy) was [redacted] rather than [redacted] assessed by the Intelligence Community. It turned out to be [redacted] Current Soviet ICBMs are not as accurate as forecast by the B Team but more accurate than estimated in the 1976 NIE.

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SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

b. The B Team report on air defenses was useful for its identification of critical uncertainties in our assessments of Soviet low altitude defense capabilities. Its main thesis--that Soviet air defenses could be much more effective than judged in the NIE--has not been confirmed by subsequent evidence or analysis, although, uncertainties remain in our largely subjective assessments of the overall effectiveness of Soviet air defenses.

c. Of the three B Team reports the one on Soviet strategic objectives received the greatest attention among Administration officials, the Congress and the media. The two reports differed in their scope and content.

--The A Team, in Chapter I of the NIE 11-3/8-76, estimated Soviet objectives for strategic nuclear forces for intercontinental conflict through the mid-1980s. The B Team report addressed Soviet strategic objectives in the broader context of all elements of the USSR's national power and estimated overall Soviet political and military goals to be achieved at some indefinite time in the future. The B Team contended that the failure of the NIE drafters in the past to recognize or to address the true nature of Soviet strategic objectives has resulted in underestimates of Soviet forces.

--Half of the B Team report consisted of a critique of certain Soviet strategic developments dating back to the 1960s which, in the opinion of the B Team, were either misinterpreted or discussed too lightly in NIEs. This section of the report was intended to provide examples supporting the B Team position that past NIEs were based on incorrect assumptions and to provide part of the evidential basis for the B Team's own conclusions about Soviet strategic objectives. Some of the B Team assessments of these past developments were consistent with intelligence findings, some were not and some remain to be affirmed or denied by evidence.

6. Soviet Strategic Objectives--Comparison of A and B Team Reports.  
The bottom line judgments of the B Team about Soviet strategic objectives are very close to those in the NIE, as indicated in the attached comparisons of the findings of the two reports. (Attachment 2) Some of the B Team conclusions went beyond the scope of NIE 11-3/8-76; in the attachment these findings are compared with the judgments in a subsequent estimate, NIE 11-4-78, "Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena." (S)

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SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

7. Despite the similarities in key judgments the B Team report conveys a much more strident tone than either NIE 11-3/8-76 or NIE 11-4-78. The B Team dutifully carried out its charge to assume an adversarial position--to marshall the evidence in support of more threatening interpretations of Soviet objectives. On the other hand, the A Team product was not an essay with a single theme; it was a national estimate which attempted to review the evidence objectively, citing the uncertainties which qualified its conclusions. Moreover, the A Team itself was split; its report expressed a range of views among the intelligence agencies. In light of the aggressiveness of Soviet conduct since 1976, the B Team report, because of its tone and the billboard effect of its interpretations of overall Soviet policies and objectives, could be regarded now as a more effective statement than findings in the NIEs, even though the conclusions of the A Team and B Team were quite similar. [redacted]

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8. Impact of the B Team Reports on NIE 11-3/8-76. There have been misunderstandings about the effect of the B Team's findings on National Intelligence Estimates. In general, the Intelligence Community benefitted from the experience of having its findings challenged by groups of experts. In part as a result of the experiment, the DCI established panels of consultants to review and critique drafts of National Intelligence Estimates. The experience also indicated that it was not practical to pattern the national intelligence production process according to the procedures followed in the experiment. Contrary to allegations appearing in the press, the judgments in the 1976 NIE were not shaped by pressures from the B Team. A memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence, George Bush, to all recipients of NIE 11-3/8-76 (Attachment 3) denied the press allegations.

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[redacted]  
David S. Brandwein  
National Intelligence Officer  
for Strategic Programs

Attachments

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SUBJECT: The "B Team" Experiment--Soviet Strategic Objectives

Distribution

Cy - DD/NFA

Cy - Chm/NIC (this copy was given to DDCI then returned to Chm/NIC and  
sent to Casper Weinburg)

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